

U.S Marine Says No To Invasions

Fifth Estate Collective

It's too bad that he had to hear the word from Allah, but still it is heartening to know that at least one Marine refused to be used as cannon fodder in Reagan's reckless war schemes.

Marine Cpl. Alfred Griffen, a practicing Muslim, told his military superiors in October 1983 that the Koran forbid him to kill fellow religionists in Lebanon or to participate in "a war of egression" in Grenada. Griffen was court-martialed for being AWOL and sentenced to a relatively light four months at hard labor.

Griffen was like many Third World youth, forced into the military as part of the "poverty draft." He had started college, but ran out of money and faced with the prospect of no money and no job joined the Marines hoping to get electronics training. A "good" Marine, Griffen was a member of the Presidential Honor Guard and once named "Marine of the Month", until running afoul of orders which violated his religious beliefs.

The case has gathered nationwide attention and in Detroit 200 people rallied in June including Griffen family members to support the jailed Marine and to protest his sentence.

There is hope that Griffen's case will encourage other "mutinies of conscience" among the armed forces particularly as Reagan moves perilously close to intervention in Central America. According to Ronald Kuby, the serviceman's volunteer attorney, "The precedent we have established in Griffen's case will limit the penalty for GI resisters to basically four months in jail."

The beginning of mass mutinies among the troops in Vietnam was a major element in the U.S. defeat there. Let's hope mutinies of conscience will end the next war before it begins.

Poster text

Maybe You can be One of Us

The Marines

(800) 443-2600

"I spent 33 years and four months in active service as a member of our country's most agile military force—the Marines. And during that period I spent most of my time being a high-class muscleman for Big Business, Wall Street and the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer for capitalism. Thus I helped make Mexico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras 'right' for American Fruit companies in 1903. In China, in 1927, I helped see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested. During those years, I had, as the boys in the back room would say, a swell racket. I was rewarded with honors, medals and promotions."

—U.S. Marine General Smedley D. Butler

DON'T FIGHT, DON'T REGISTER!

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